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C O N F I D E N T I A L CHISINAU 000216

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [MD](#)
SUBJECT: VORONIN BELIEVES NDI IS FOMENTING PRO-
ROMANIAN UNIFICATION DEMONSTRATIONS TO BE HELD
MARCH 27

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Ref A: Chisinau 212

¶1. (C) Summary: Following discussions of 2-plus-1 and Transnistria, the Ambassador raised the issue of NDI in his March 19 meeting with President Voronin (ref A). Anticipating that NDI would be raised, Voronin took from his desk a "fresh" intel report dated March 19 and read it to us. The report cited a website "27martie.wordpress.com" which, according to the report, was calling for a series of large demonstrations to celebrate Unification Day (March 27, 1918, was the date of Bessarabia's unification with Romania), right during the election campaign. The report had determined that organizational activities for this event were being carried out in Timisoara, Romania.

¶2. (C) According to the intelligence information provided to Voronin, an NDI expert was involved in the organization of this event, and had traveled to Timisoara, where he had a series of meetings; at the same time, a second NDI expert went to Kyiv. The first was an "expert in manipulating youth," while the second was an "expert in directing the activities of political leaders." The report further charged that the plan involved manipulation of Moldovan students in Romania, as the Moldovan students would serve as a shield for helping Romanian students cross the border. The final goal of this interference, suggested the intel report read by Voronin, was stimulation of the pro-unification element during the electoral campaign. Saying that he did not want any destabilizing events, Voronin asked Ambassador to react.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador responded that he was "truly stunned" and said that he would have to see proof that something had happened, questioning whether the supposed travelers had been expats or locals. Ambassador then noted that NDI and IRI have very clear mandates to educate participants in democratic principles, and could not believe that NDI as an organization would be involved in anything like this. The Ambassador added that if, in fact, an NDI employee had traveled to Timisoara for the purpose alleged in the report in their personal capacity, that should not taint the name or reputation of NDI. President Voronin said he would follow the ongoing investigation of this incident and requested the Ambassador to look into this as well.

¶4. (C) Comment: The bizarre accusation lodged against NDI had an air of unreality, leaving us with the need to prove the impossibility of the absurd. If Voronin truly believes reports like this from his intelligence services, there is little wonder that he is skeptical about NDI and reluctant to renew its permission to stay in country. The website "27martie.wordpress.com" does exist, and it does indeed call for a massive pro-unification demonstration to be held in Chisinau on March 27, but there is no logical link between this demonstration and NDI. With information like this in Voronin's hands, NDI's problems in Moldova are still far from being solved. NDI has informed us that the traveler to Timisoara was a Serb national who has been working in-country as an elections long-term observer (LTO) since last summer. The LTO was picked up by family members and driven to Serbia.

CHAUDHRY